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DESP. NO.

April 15, 1955
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SUBJECT: Bi-weekly Review - April 1 through April 15.

POLITICAL

Appointment of New Governor General (UNCLASSIFIED)

Four days before the departure of Governor General Sir John MACPHERSON, Colonial Secretary LENNOX-BOYD announced the appointment of Sir James Wilson ROBERTSON to be Governor General and Commander in Chief of the Federation of Nigeria. The new Governor General is a retired colonial officer who served exclusively in the Sudan from 1922 until 1953. After his retirement in 1953, he was appointed chairman of the commission which investigated the political situation in British Guiana and recommended constitutional changes.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

The announcement has received a cool reception from both Nigerian political leaders and expatriate administrative officials. The AG in particular has expressed its disappointment that a civil servant rather than a politician has been selected to head the Federation during the "crucial period" ahead.

Macpherson Farewell (UNCLASSIFIED)

Sir John and Lady Macpherson sailed from Lagos on the morning of April 12 after an impressive farewell ceremony on the new Apapa wharf (see Economic, below). Traffic was halted and the city assumed a holiday aspect as thousands of residents lined the banks of the harbor in what was apparently a spontaneous gesture of farewell to the man who had been Governor of Nigeria since April 1948.

In a farewell speech Sir John stated that he was by nature optimistic but that he wished to refer to the dangers and difficulties which faced the country. He mentioned the possibility that inter-regional and inter-tribal difficulties may worsen as

power is transferred

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power is transferred from the center and political leaders exacerbate real or imagined tension points. Sir John alluded to his experience in Palestine where villages with Jewish, Moslem and Christian inhabitants had lived together amicably for centuries until "politics came into it and people with political axes to grind came and caused them to hate each other".

He then stressed his anxiety over the future of the Nigerian civil service. He referred to the qualms of many expatriate officials in regard to their future in Nigeria, stating that he had not forgotten the "admirably forthright assurances" given by Nigerian political leaders during the London conference, but that British officials still hear anti-expatriate talk on the lower levels. He termed it a "dangerous illusion" for Nigerians to think that Britain would insure that a sufficient number of expatriate officials would remain in Nigeria and warned that "if there were to be a premature exodus of British officers, the whole structure that we have built up so carefully together would crash in ruins".

Adjournment of Federal House (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Federal House adjourned sine die on April 7, after considering only a portion of the private members' bills and questions, which presumably will be deferred until the August session.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

The wrangling and bickering which characterized the budget meeting of the House abated only slightly in the closing week of meetings. By resorting to extending sessions into the early hours of the morning, the Government narrowly achieved the April 1 deadline for the passage of the Federal budget (see Economic, below).

Eastern Resident Quarrel (UNCLASSIFIED)

The feud between Premier AZIKIWE and Eastern Governor Clem PLEASS over the elimination of one resident (see D-159, April 1, p.2) was transported to a higher level of authority when Colonial Secretary Lennox-Boyd declared in the House of Commons that he would support the Governor's position that the legislature's action was subject to veto under his reserve powers. Lennox-Boyd added that he considered Zik's actions a disappointing denial of the specific assurances which he had received during his recent tour of Nigeria regarding tenure of expatriate government officers. At the week's end it was announced that Zik would confer in Lagos with Acting Governor General Sir Hugo MARSHALL on matters which the NCNC press declared had no connection with the residency dispute.

The Governor has

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The Governor has announced that he will recall the Eastern House on April 19 to consider his supplementary budget bill restoring funds for the deleted position.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Although both AG and NCNC editors have rapped Lennox-Boyd for his "summary" and "blanket" endorsement of Pleass's action, the weight of opinion within the NCNC appears to be veering to a more moderate position on the matter. At the NCNC National Convention a resolution was offered and passed urging the Government to settle its differences with the Governor.

According to information obtained by Consul Williams in a recent visit to Enugu, expatriate officials there differ in their opinion of Sir Clem's actions. Some hold that the Governor had no alternative but to stand firm on the issue if he were to prevent utter demoralization among the expatriate staff. Others state that he could and should have forestalled the move by making permanent (rather than temporary) appointments to the vacant residencies, and that Zik has the greater weight of evidence on his side in claiming that the posts are vacant. There is the possibility that the dispute might generate more heat if the Eastern House prefers to wage a propaganda war rather than accept defeat gracefully when it reconvenes on the 19th. But in light of the above-mentioned resolution by the NCNC Convention, this danger appears lessened.

Liberalization of Public Assembly in Lagos (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Federal House passed the Government's bill abolishing the present requirement of a police permit for each political meeting held in Lagos. Under the new statute, however, organizers of political meetings must notify the police of their intention to hold such meetings and the Chief Secretary of the Federation in his disgression may ban all meetings for a period of up to three months.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

Opposition members hammered at the limited geographical scope of the bill and said that it should be extended to the Eastern Region.

Proposed Inquiry of Syrians and Lebanese (UNCLASSIFIED)

In a motion in the Federal House, opposition leader AKINTOLA requested the Council of Ministers to appoint a commission to investigate and prepare recommendations regarding the real estate, commercial and mining interests of aliens in Nigeria and to evaluate the effect of their activities upon native Nigerians. The amendment

proved politically

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proved politically popular and attracted supporting speeches from representatives of all parties; the Chief Whip of the NPC, Malam Bello DANDAGO, declared that his party would have supported the motion if the bill had limited the investigation to Syrians and Lebanese rather than all aliens.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

During the course of the debate, the Chief Secretary, in seeking to convert the motion to one praising the Government's immigration policy, produced sketchy data on the number of foreigners in Nigeria. In 1931 there were approximately 340 Syrians and Lebanese out of a total of 1616 aliens in Nigeria; in 1952 the figures were 1790 and 4555 respectively. Akintola felt that immigration policy, while important, was not the central issue. In proposing that the Government should effect a closer control over the commercial activities of resident aliens he referred to the Roman practice of providing Government legal review or assistance to citizens who entered into contracts with aliens.

Appointment of Eastern Regional Commissioner in London (UNCLASSIFIED)

A young Onitsha lawyer, Mr. Chukweuneka OJIAKO, has been appointed as the first Commissioner of the Eastern Region in the United Kingdom. Only 37, Mr. Ojiako was General Secretary of the Nigerian Union while studying in the UK and has been an executive member of both the NCNC and the Ibo State Union since his return to Nigeria in 1950.

Nigerianization (UNCLASSIFIED)
(See D-159, April 1, p.3)

In a forceful presentation of his views concerning the question of accelerated Nigerianization, Chief Secretary Marshall presented a lengthy address to the Federal House at the close of the debate on the appropriation bill. In advocating that House members should view the problem realistically and without undue emotion, he said that at the time of the revised constitution about 2,000 of the 5,400 senior service posts in Nigeria were held by Nigerians. At the present time he stated that Nigerianization is being accelerated because "we are now, and only now, beginning to reap the full benefit of the scholarship schemes which started four years ago".

Sir Hugo noted that the functions of ministerial permanent secretaries had changed in that all policy decisions were now taken by the Council of Ministers and that expatriate officials were relied upon only to furnish technical advice and administer their departments. Although the number of Nigerians in the senior service

posts will increase

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posts will increase, he cautioned the House that the maintenance of civil service standards would require that expatriates make up the majority of senior civil servants for some time to come and that 90 per cent Nigerianization could not be reached for 10 or possibly 15 years.

Appointment of Federal Minister of Public Works (UNCLASSIFIED)

Malam Inuwa WADA, Federal Minister without portfolio, has been named Federal Minister of Public Works. His new portfolio has been taken from that of Minister Abukar Tafawa BALEWA, who will now be responsible only for Transport.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

Presumably in answer to the numerous complaints that the four ministers without portfolio should be assigned responsibilities, the appointment of Northerner Wada means that all three NPC ministers have portfolios, while only four of the six NCNC representatives have been assigned ministries.

EDUCATION

Opening of Northern Regional Medical School (UNCLASSIFIED)

On April 2[illegible] the Northern Regional Minister of Health, the Honorable YAHAYA, Madawakin of Ilorin, inaugarated at Kano the first medical school in the Northern Region. In his dedication speech the minister referred to the shortage of qualified medical staff in the Region and stated that the shortage of educated youths had forced the government to accept medical students with only a secondary 4 degree (roughly equivalent to junior high school graduate). A message from the Federal Minister of Natural Resources, Adegoke ADELABU, congratulated the Region on the establishment of the school and assured the school authorities that they might rely on every help and cooperation from the recently-established teaching hospital at Ibadan.

Eastern Educational Plans (UNCLASSIFIED)

Eastern Regional Minister of Education, I. U. AKPABIO, announced that 505 primary schools were inaugarated in the Eastern Region during 1954. During the same period the government had approved 12 new secondary schools and had voted £95,000 for teacher training. He announced that the Region plans to present a bill in the next meeting of the Eastern House to set up a university college similar to that at Ibadan. Promising that universal primary education will soon be achieved, he stated that it will be supplemented by £500,000 adult education scheme.

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LABOR

Federal Labour Advisory Council (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Federal Minister of Labor and Welfare, Chief Festus S. OKOTIE-EBOH, announced in the Federal House that a Labor Advisory Council was to be established. He stated that the existing informal arrangements for consultation between the Government and the representatives of employers' and workers' associations are not "entirely satisfactory". The new Council is to be a standing consultative body under the chairmanship of the Minister of Labor with eight representatives of the employers and eight trade unionists. Its terms of reference will be:

> "To consider and advise the Minister on matters referred to it by the Minister relating to the application and operation of existing and proposed labour and social security legislation; and the application of International Labour Conventions."

Appointment to the Council will be made by the Minister of Labor for a term of 12 months, with an unspecified mandatory turnover each year.

The Minister stated that the Council will be federal in character and purpose but that he considered the knowledge gained from its operation would be invaluable to the Regional Governments which might wish to establish similar Councils.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

In describing the Council the Minister was careful to point out that the labor members would be personally chosen by himself and would not serve as nominees of any particular organization. This is a definite slap at ANTUF whose leaders have been criticized for NCNC sympathy (See page 5-6, D.147; March 18, 1955.

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ECONOMIC

Federal Development Program (UNCLASSIFIED)

In a White Paper presented to the Federal House of Representatives, the Council of Ministers has proposed a £22.3 million development plan for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1955. Funds now carried as surplus, remaining from previous development schemes and from already-appropriated railway improvement bills, will provide approximately £4.5 million, with £17.8 million to be borrowed or obtained from the surplus of 1955 revenue.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

Although in scope the Government's project covers all fields under Federal jurisdiction, the Paper clearly was largely influenced, if not inspired, by the recommendations made by the International Bank Mission.

Inauguration of Nigerian Ports Authority (UNCLASSIFIED)

All Marine properties or vessels formerly owned by the Government were formally transferred to the new Nigerian Ports Authority on April 1, 1955. The Nigerian Marine Department will be only slightly modified since it becomes a department of the new Authority. The inauguration of the new scheme was timed to coincide with the opening of the Apapa Wharf Extension. The Authority is planned to be self-supporting and will levy 6d for each ton of incoming freight.

Nigerian Railway Corporation (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Federal House approved several amendments to the Nigerian Railway Corporation Law (See page 6, D-59; April 1, 1955). The most important amendments broaden the Corporation's liability for loss or damage to goods carried and increase the number of Corporation directors from 9 to 12.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Representatives of European commercial firms as well as Nigerian politicians have voiced their apprehension that the power given to the Corporation's Chairman, Col. EMERSON, is too broad. Although the Government announced that it accepted the amendment increasing the number of directors in order to maximise African representation in the Corporation, as the law now stands the Chairman has an effective veto over the decisions of the directors.

Nigerian Trade in January 1955 (UNCLASSIFIED)

January trade figures were uncomfortably close to balance, with the value of exports at £11.95 million and imports at £11.46 million

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million. Corresponding figures for January 1954 were £13.46 million and £9.62 million.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

The low value of exports is traceable to the small volume of cocoa and palm kernel shipment. Where 17.7 thousand tons of cocoa were shipped in January 1954, only 10.9 thousand tons were exported in the corresponding month of 1955. The increased value of tin and columbite exports was not sufficient to offset the loss from cocoa.

Imports for the month reached the highest value ever recorded. It is probable that this level will not be maintained since the port was extremely busy during the month handling shipments which had been delayed by the October dock strike in the United Kingdom.

Passage of FY 1956 Appropriation Bill (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Federal House approved £47 million for the Federal Government's expenses for the year beginning April 1, 1955. Only one amendment to the Government's bill was approved, raising the salaries of the NCNC and NPC Government Whips to equal the £1,000 emolument given Chief Akintola as Leader of Opposition.

Assistance to the Southern Cameroons (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Federal budget contains a provision that financial assistance in the form of loans or grants may be extended to the Southern Cameroons without supplementary legislation during the next three financial years.

Federal Housing Scheme (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Federal House approved a Government motion introduced by the Federal Minister of Land, Mines and Power, Mallam Muhammadu RIBADU, allotting £1 million for a pilot low-cost housing project in Lagos. Plans call for the construction of approximately 1,800 residential structures on the mainland adjacent to the island of Lagos with accommodations for 6-7,000 persons. The Minister admitted that the scheme would be highly subsidized and that the monthly rent per house would average twenty-five shillings ($3.40). He stated that the development of the site would commence in November 1955 and that 400 houses should be ready for occupancy in September 1956.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

Opposition Leader Akintola said that he welcomed the Government's move but that the plan could not substitute for a realistic increase in the workers' minimum wages.

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MISCELLANEOUS OFFICE ACTIVITIES (UNCLASSIFIED)

Travel of Consul Williams

Consul E. R. Williams of this office departed Lagos on April 3 for a three-week trip to Enugu and Port Harcourt in the Eastern Region, and to Jos, Kano and Kaduna in the North.

Visit of T. T. Russell

Mr. RUSSELL, a partner of Weed, Russell Johnson Association, Miami, Florida, the architectural firm which is designing the new office for the Consulate General, visited Lagos from April 3 - 8. Encouraging progress was made during his visit, and it is hoped that construction of temporary office quarters (for use during demolition of the existing office and construction of the new building) may be initiated by July 1955.

Edward D. McLaughlin
American Consul General

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